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TX-CW1206

Texas Crop Weather

Released March 20, 2006 (3:00 PM CST)

For the week of March 13 - 19, 2006

Agricultural Summary: The fires in the Panhandle had been put out and much needed rain and thunderstorms were blowing through the state by week's end. An estimated 840,000 acres were scorched over the week; killing upwards of 10,000 cattle and horses. At the data collection cut-off point for this report, a massive line of severe thunderstorms were barreling east at a fast clip. Nearly all accumulated rainfall for the week was associated with that line of storms. Showers were welcomed in all areas where they were received. North Central and Northeast Texas reported up to 2 inches of accumulated precipitation for the week. Portions of the Low Rolling Plains and the Edwards Plateau received rainfall amounts ranging from ½ inch to 2 inches. Other regions reporting moisture were the Panhandle, Central Texas and the Upper Coast. Rain gauge readings were generally under ½ inch in these areas. Prior to the rains, high winds of up to 60 mph in the Panhandle were major contributors to the spread of the wildfires. Spring green-up continued in many areas, especially in North Central Texas where adequate rains have been falling for the past few weeks. Planting of summer crops continued and was progressing northward. The soil profile was still short of moisture and much more would be needed for additional crop emergence and growth. Irrigation of crops and pastures remained active where possible. Pasture growth occurred in eastern regions but supplemental feeding was still necessary in all areas. Cattle herd liquidation continued in most locations.

Field Crops Report

Small Grains: The increased precipitation was expected to be beneficial to small grains, but for many fields it may have come too late. Irrigation continued in fields on the Panhandle where there were some reports of green bugs. Fields were headed-out in south and central locations. The only grazing opportunities that remained were under pivots. Wheat in northeast areas was looking fairly decent compared to all other regions in the state that were suffering from drought conditions. Statewide, wheat condition was rated mostly poor to very poor. Statewide, oat condition was rated mostly very poor.

Cotton: Planting has begun on the Blacklands as producers took advantage of increased moisture. On the Plains, preparations such as pre-watering and yellow herbicide applications were ongoing. Planting continued under very dry conditions on the Upper Coast, Coastal Bend and Rio Grande Valley. Significant rainfall would be needed in those southern regions as soon as possible in order for a crop to take hold.

Corn: Corn producers on the Blacklands were busy planting. Many were finishing up in southern locations of the region. Early planted fields emerged with decent stands. Growers

throughout the Upper Coast, Coastal Bend and Rio Grande Valley were still awaiting a desperately needed rain to get their crop off to a good start. Some producers were still holding out for rain before seeding. Irrigation was active where available.

Sorghum: Blackland growers continued to plant sorghum. Some emergence was realized. Conditions were dry in southern regions and much more moisture would be needed in the near future. Field preparations continued in northern areas.

Rice and Soybeans: Planting has begun on the Upper Coast.

Fruit, Vegetable and Specialty Crop Report

In the **Rio Grande Valley**, harvest of naval oranges was just about complete. Valencia harvest was getting kicked off.

In the **San Antonio-Winter Garden**, irrigation continued on cabbage, spinach, onions and carrots.

In **East Texas**, watermelon transplants were being put in the ground with row covers. Sweet potato growers continued their preparations.

Peaches and pecans were beginning to bud out and bloom in many areas. Irrigation was heavy where available.

Livestock, Pasture and Range Report

The burned pasture lands on the Panhandle were helped by rain late in the week. All areas that received rain should benefit a great deal. The spring green-up increased grazing opportunities somewhat but all regions were still suffered from lingering drought. Supplemental feeding remained necessary in all areas. Hay prices showed no sign of decreasing and bales were very hard to come by. Importation of hay from neighboring states continued. Cattle herds were thinned out to sustainable stocking levels. Body conditions were still behind where they should be. Spring calving was ongoing.

Crop Progress Table - March 19, 2006

Crop	Stage	2006	2005	Average 2001-2005
- Percent -				
Corn	Planted	42	26	28
	Emerged	14	8	11
Cotton	Planted	5	4	4
Rice	Planted	14	4	5
Sorghum	Planted	20	18	20
Soybeans	Planted	6	2	2
Winter Wheat	Headed	3	4	2
Oats	Headed	6	--	--

Top Soil Moisture by District – March 19, 2006 *

Condition	1-N	1-S	2-N	2-S	3	4	5-N	5-S	6	7	8-N	8-S	9	10-N	10-S
- Percent of Acreage -															
Very Short	90	78	66	70	42	27	6	15	45	70	63	97	11	73	85
Short	9	20	21	15	52	38	25	44	44	22	20	3	45	25	15
Adequate	1	2	13	15	6	31	61	39	11	6	17	0	37	2	0
Surplus	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	2	0	2	0	0	7	0	0

* High Plains: 1-N, 1-S; Low Rolling Plains: 2-N, 2-S; North Central Plains: 3, 4; East Texas: 5-N, 5-S.
Trans-Pecos: 6; Edwards Plateau: 7; South Central Texas: 8-N, 8-S; Upper Coast: 9; South Texas: 10-N; Lower Valley: 10-S.

Crop Condition Table – March 19, 2006

Crop	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Index ^{1/}	
	Percent					2006	2005
Wheat	0	6	14	26	54	23	85
Oats	1	3	11	26	59	20	--
Range & Pasture	0	4	19	30	47	--	--

^{1/} The formula for the condition index is $I = (5V + 25P + 60F + 90G + 110E)/100$ where
I=crop condition Index and V, P, F, G, E = percentage of crop rated very poor, poor, fair, good, excellent.

Weather Information Table ^{1/}

National Weather Service Climatic Divisions	Previous Week (Mar 13 - 19) Accumulation	Month-to-date (Mar 1 - 19) Accumulation	Year-to-date (Jan 1 - Mar 19) Accumulation	1961-90 Annual Normal	Previous Three Months (Dec - Feb) Percent of Normal
High Plains	1.07	1.12	1.27	18.87	10
Low Rolling Plains	1.31	1.45	1.81	23.78	13
North Central Texas	2.70	2.91	6.32	34.00	61
East Texas	2.13	2.63	9.92	45.69	78
Trans Pecos	0.51	0.55	0.74	12.96	23
Edwards Plateau	1.07	1.17	2.17	24.01	33
South Central Texas	0.95	0.96	2.39	34.48	29
Upper Coast	0.04	0.08	2.95	47.63	48
South Texas	0.11	0.21	0.30	23.49	7
Lower Valley	0.00	0.00	0.29	25.34	27

^{1/} Average of all stations reporting precipitation data.

For more weather information, please visit the following web sites:
www.srh.noaa.gov/rfcs/share/precip_analysis_new.php and www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html

Cooperating Agencies:

Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Texas Department of Agriculture

National Weather Service

